

BLAIR FIELD OFFICE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

NINETEENTH EDITION - JULY 2022

POLICY UPDATES TO CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

On June 9th, 2022, the Papio-Missouri River NRD Board of Directors approved proposed policy updates to District Conservation Programs. Updates include increases in annual payments for specific programs as well as an update on eligible practices. Specific updates include:

- Increase of cost-share assistance limit per contract from \$20,000 to \$50,000 on eligible practices
- Increase of Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) annual payments from \$50/acre to \$100/acre
- Update eligible practices to include Windbreak Renovations (see below)
- Increase annual payment for Lands for Conservation from \$100/acre to \$200/acre (max 40 acres)

For more information on these policy updates or to apply for any of our conservation programs, call the Blair office at (402)426-4782!

WINDBREAK RENOVATIONS NOW ELIGIBLE FOR COST-SHARE ASSISTANCE

As part of the recent Policy Manual updates, Windbreak Renovations are now an eligible practice through the Conservation Assistance Program! Windbreaks on farms, ranches and home acreages not only conserve soil and water resources, but also provide critical protection for homes, livestock, and wildlife. Conservation tree plantings are valuable assets and investments to the rural landscape.

Windbreaks require management and eventual replacement. Unfortunately, many windbreaks in our District are reaching the end of their lifespan. Signs of a windbreak declining include: less than 50% density during winter months causing snow drifts into protected areas, little to no tree regeneration, competition stress among trees, and majority of trees being over 50 years old.

If you notice any of these conditions, your windbreak may benefit from one or more of the following renovations:

- If the total windbreak is in poor condition, with no healthy, young trees growing and the belt is only 50-80 feet wide, the complete windbreak may need to be taken out and a new 3-4 row windbreak planted.
- If the windbreak is more than 80 feet wide, half of the width can be removed and replanted with new rows while the other half is left for protection to the newly planted trees.
- If the initial spacing is too close, some thinning and tree removal to promote the healthy trees may be required.



Pictured left is an example of a healthy windbreak. The photo to the right shows a windbreak in need of renovation.

*Photos by Jorden Smith,
Papio NRD Forester*



Cost-share assistance is now available for certain Windbreak Renovations! Assistance includes cost-share on the removal of old trees as well as the planting of new rows in that location. The Papio NRD will work with the Nebraska Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service to provide assistance to landowners. Contact the Blair office at (402)426-4782 for more information!

FALL COVER CROP PLANNING

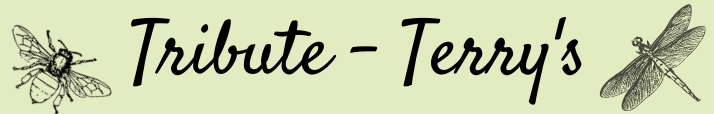
by Armando Zarco, Watershed Coordinator



Photo courtesy of USDA-NRCS

What can cover crops do for me? I'm glad you asked! Planting cover crops in your field can help reduce erosion from wind and water, increase your soil's organic matter content, promote biological nitrogen fixation and reduce energy costs, manage soil moisture, suppress weeds, and many more benefits!

Now that summer has started and you're looking towards harvest, this is the perfect time to consider ordering seeding for planting cover crops on your field this Fall. Feel free to call our office if you are needing assistance on what seeding variety to plant, looking to apply for various cost-share programs to assist in your seed purchase, or have any further questions on cover crops and the many benefits it can do for you and the environment.



Tribute - Terry's

A Word from Terry Schumacher,
Land & Water Programs Coordinator

It is the time of year that everyone is thinking about fireworks, camping, and so on. It's also a good time to think about a pollinator project! There are some in the county that have been installed in the last couple of years and they are looking good! If you are interested in a pollinator project, it is never too early to start planning. There are some really attractive cost-share and incentive programs to assist in the establishment of pollinator habitat.

Now is also the time to start thinking about tree planting for Spring 2023. The Windbreak Renovation Program should be of interest to a whole bunch of folks throughout the Papio NRD. With a shared Forester on staff, the expertise and financial incentives are there to make this a wildly successful program! Contact your Field Office if you are interested in any type of conservation project.



Visit our booth at the Washington County Fair!

JULY 29TH - AUGUST 3RD

FAIRGROUNDS: 23656 US-30, ARLINGTON, NE 68002

We will have free literature, merchandise, and raffles! There will also be NRD staff members available to talk to you about conservation practices on your land!

